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PRESS RELEASE

No: 244/2014

Date: 22nd May 2014

Feetham Criticises Caruana & Disagrees with Montegriffo

The statements from Mr Feetham yesterday on public finances are so ridiculous that they almost do not merit a reply. Nonetheless, given that what Mr Feetham is doing is trying to pull the wool over people's eyes, the Government will respond to illustrate the absurdity of what Mr Feetham, the GSD's hapless "nightwatchman" is saying by repeatedly crying wolf every single day of the week on Gibraltar's finances.

First of all, the undeniable fact is that the GSLP/Liberals were right to highlight to the public the level of borrowing of over half a billion pounds at the time of the election, given the size of the economy then and the rules on borrowing as well as the hidden hole of one hundred million pounds in company liabilities.

Secondly, as has been demonstrated by the Government by reference to independent documents from Her Majesty's Treasury in Gibraltar, the total amount of useable cash reserve at the end of the GSD's last financial year in office was ONLY £2m.

Thirdly, continuing with GSD projects after the 9th of December would therefore have required them to borrow more - in addition to the half billion pounds they had already borrowed directly and the almost one hundred million pounds liability incurred in Government companies and which the GSD did not show in the public accounts.

Fourthly, as the GSD has had to admit, they were going to deal with the shortage of useable cash reserves by borrowing further and Sir Peter Caruana was going to bring a motion to Parliament for that purpose. Their plan for a new power station would have been disastrous and involved huge increases in electricity charges.

As a result, all of Mr Feetham's statements in respect of public finances can be seen to be no more than works of fiction that don't stand up to the slightest bit of serious financial scrutiny, let alone the overwhelmingly clear evidence produced by the Treasury. They must, moreover, be a huge embarrassment to Sir Peter Caruana, who is now having to see his party criticise the things he established as normal practice whilst in Government and separately to Mr Montegriffo, the founder of the GSD, who has publically contradicted Mr Feetham on the issue of the consultation on Gibraltar's EU status. Mr Feetham is also blind to the obvious logic of the fact that if he is criticising something he must be against it

- so if he says we shouldn't spend money on particular projects, he can't also be saying to the beneficiaries of such works that he too would deliver them.

The Chief Minister, Hon Fabian Picardo MP, said: "Not only does the infamous 'nightwatchman' of the GSD now want to stop the refurbishment works at Glacis, Laguna and Moorish Castle (the forgotten estates) which will also greatly beautify and enhance the entrance to Gibraltar, and stop the building of affordable homes, he also wants to put up electricity charges which would increase the costs of doing business in Gibraltar. Too boot he is highly critical of how the GSD organised its finances when he was in Government with them and therefore of what they previously called their prudent way of doing things. And all that in a day when we have also seen that Mr Montegriffo, the founder of the GSD takes a completely different line to Mr Feetham on the important consultation we are carrying out on our EU status. But I guess it makes sense that Danny Feetham should be criticising Sir Peter and disagreeing with Mr Montegriffo given that for most of the time the GSD was in Government he was in political parties that opposed them. Those ideological differences just can't be kept under wraps however many twists Mr Feetham wants to give the fictional works he calls press releases. Meanwhile, the Government is ensuring that Gibraltar's economy is doing remarkably well, which is what really matters to people!"